

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday, November 14, 2003

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES OCTOBER 2003

Notice of New Sample: The advance estimates in this report are the first estimates from a new sample, which was selected from the full monthly sample. For more information on the new sample, see the FAQ on our web site at <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advfaq.html>

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for October, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$318.5 billion, a decrease of 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from the previous month, but up 6.1 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from October 2002. Total sales for the August through October 2003 period were up 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from the same period a year ago. The August to September 2003 percent change was revised from -0.2 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) to -0.4 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

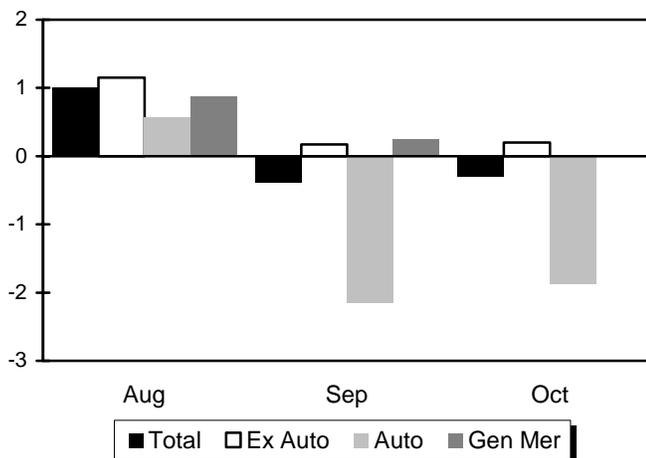
Retail trade sales were down 0.5 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from September, but were 5.7 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) above last year. Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 12.5 percent ($\pm 2.2\%$) from October 2002 and sales of furniture and home furnishings stores were up 10.9 percent ($\pm 3.8\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

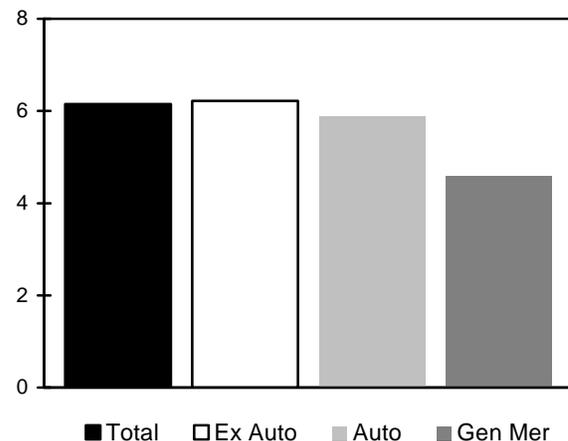
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for November is scheduled to be released December 11, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-763-2713.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Table 1. Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		10 Month Total		2003			2002		2003			2002	
		2003	% Chg. 2002	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	3,088,872	5.4	318,830	308,734	332,178	298,773	283,660	318,490	319,438	320,703	300,048	298,239
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,324,482	5.3	245,477	232,930	248,550	229,121	215,364	243,974	243,493	243,088	229,680	227,362
	Retail	2,791,138	5.3	287,654	279,350	299,455	270,824	256,479	287,835	289,362	290,121	272,321	270,361
	GAFO³	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,874	84,326	75,626	70,194	(*)	82,517	82,464	79,055	77,480
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	764,390	5.9	73,353	75,804	83,628	69,652	68,296	74,516	75,945	77,615	70,368	70,877
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	698,578	6.1	66,394	69,080	76,680	63,048	62,169	67,888	69,288	71,066	64,138	64,625
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	58,890	65,045	54,481	53,763	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,724	6,948	6,604	6,127	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	80,596	5.2	8,867	8,365	8,726	7,968	7,547	8,702	8,615	8,530	7,850	7,936
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,457	4,735	4,319	4,174	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,908	3,991	3,649	3,373	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	72,636	4.3	7,631	7,553	8,160	7,032	6,821	8,123	8,123	8,090	7,534	7,454
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,259	5,897	4,958	4,831	(*)	5,856	5,874	5,485	5,434
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,294	2,263	2,074	1,990	(*)	2,267	2,216	2,049	2,020
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	271,970	6.5	29,921	28,187	27,940	26,687	24,760	28,244	27,790	27,433	25,113	25,217
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,572	25,130	24,058	22,499	(*)	24,331	24,002	22,112	22,254
445	Food & beverage stores	418,507	3.5	42,498	41,327	43,758	40,733	39,234	42,488	42,892	42,781	41,080	40,855
4451	Grocery stores	378,335	3.3	38,152	37,258	39,344	36,912	35,546	38,076	38,529	38,459	37,097	36,873
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,627	2,841	2,531	2,419	(*)	2,792	2,761	2,591	2,598
446	Health & personal care stores	156,858	5.9	16,479	15,635	15,934	15,315	14,434	16,300	16,219	16,177	15,254	15,258
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,478	13,481	13,024	12,293	(*)	13,952	13,813	12,959	12,981
447	Gasoline stations	221,167	10.1	22,633	22,409	23,822	21,298	20,413	21,868	22,231	22,139	20,901	20,372
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	135,375	3.5	14,753	13,563	15,443	13,939	12,418	15,147	15,126	14,989	14,484	13,860
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	775	913	821	741	(*)	861	869	819	808
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,838	2,801	2,789	2,620	(*)	2,981	2,906	2,817	2,764
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,795	5,499	5,189	4,328	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,705	2,339	1,664	1,586	(*)	1,839	1,849	1,817	1,720
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	61,316	-0.9	5,862	6,357	7,496	6,133	6,322	6,631	6,777	6,993	6,954	6,864
452	General merchandise stores	369,183	4.5	39,282	35,802	40,781	37,122	33,847	40,543	40,534	40,436	38,767	37,925
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	165,566	-4.0	17,568	15,890	18,447	17,960	16,231	18,322	18,457	18,482	19,073	18,577
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,146	18,737	18,242	16,492	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,912	22,334	19,162	17,616	(*)	22,077	21,954	19,694	19,348
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,911	19,100	16,092	14,892	(*)	18,728	18,634	16,590	16,311
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,001	3,234	3,070	2,724	(*)	3,349	3,320	3,104	3,037
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	84,869	-0.1	8,913	8,535	9,048	8,882	8,373	8,744	8,696	8,796	8,791	8,816
454	Nonstore retailers	154,271	7.2	17,462	15,813	14,719	16,063	14,014	16,529	16,414	16,142	15,225	14,927
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ...	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,296	9,730	10,254	9,242	(*)	10,432	10,296	9,738	9,627
722	Food services & drinking places ...	297,734	6.9	31,176	29,384	32,723	27,949	27,181	30,655	30,076	30,582	27,727	27,878

(*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

(NA) Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12-ARIMA program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

(2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

(3) GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(4532)).

(4) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Oct. 2003 Advance from --		Sept. 2003 Preliminary from --		Aug. 2003 through Oct. 2003 from --	
		Sept. 2003 (p)	Oct. 2002 (r)	Aug. 2003 (r)	Sept. 2002 (r)	May 2003 through Jul. 2003	Aug. 2002 through Oct. 2002
	Retail & food services, total	-0.3	6.1	-0.4	7.1	1.9	6.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.2	6.2	0.2	7.1	2.5	6.7
	Retail	-0.5	5.7	-0.3	7.0	1.9	6.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-1.9	5.9	-2.2	7.2	0.0	5.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.0	5.8	-2.5	7.2	-0.2	5.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.0	10.9	1.0	8.6	3.1	9.2
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.0	7.8	0.4	9.0	3.1	8.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.6	12.5	1.3	10.2	4.4	10.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.9	3.4	0.3	5.0	1.1	4.3
4451	Grocery stores	-1.2	2.6	0.2	4.5	0.7	3.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.5	6.9	0.3	6.3	2.4	6.8
447	Gasoline stations	-1.6	4.6	0.4	9.1	4.4	7.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.1	4.6	0.9	9.1	2.0	6.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-2.2	-4.6	-3.1	-1.3	0.5	-1.1
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.0	4.6	0.2	6.9	2.4	5.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.7	-3.9	-0.1	-0.6	0.8	-2.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.6	-0.5	-1.1	-1.4	0.0	-0.8
454	Nonstore retailers	0.7	8.6	1.7	10.0	3.9	8.2
722	Food services & drinking places	1.9	10.6	-1.7	7.9	2.1	9.4

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

Source of Data: The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

Reliability of Estimates: The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence

interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value). Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.0	1.6	0.8	1.9	0.7	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.7	0.8	2.1	0.8	1.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.7	1.8	1.2	2.3	0.4	0.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. & ..						
	supplies dealers.....	2.0	1.1	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.8	0.6	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.2
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.7	0.5	1.4	0.4	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.7	0.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.5	1.8	1.4	2.0	0.0	0.7
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.4	3.3	1.8	3.3	0.2	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	4.8	2.3	0.9	2.6	0.0	0.9
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.3	0.6



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.
 (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.